

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

by General Gardanne was sent to train Iranian troops for action. Yet in 1807 Napoleon destroyed the edifice of friendship he had built by concluding the Treaty of Tilsit with Russia. The Shah felt offended and betrayed. In 1809 he expelled Gardanne and was ready to receive a British mission, which offered him an alliance.

With the passing of French influence, Iran remained face to face with her two neighbors, Russia and Britain (through British-controlled India), who proved to be permanent factors in Iran's foreign relations. Of these two, Russia has constantly been on the offensive. Aspiring to gain access to warm-water ports, Russia was jealous of Britain's position in India and displayed unsatiated territorial and economic ambitions. Her relationship to Iran was one of steady pressure and advance at the expense of her southern neighbor. As far back as 1754 Peter the Great raided and temporarily occupied Iran's northern province of Gilan.

Beginning with the reign of Catherine the Great, Russian pressure increased. Russia fought aggressive wars with Iran in 1796 and 1800-1813; the later one was concluded by the Treaty of Gulistan. A new war was waged in 1826-1828. These wars resulted in the gradual loss by Iran of her rich Caucasian provinces. Mingrelia, Karabagh, Shirvan, Derbent, Baku, Erivan, and Nakhichevan were one by one annexed by Russia. The Treaty of Turkomanchai of 1828 crowned this victorious advance by establishing the frontier on the Aras River south of the Caucasus range and by subjecting Iran to the political and economic supremacy of Russia. By a clever arrangement Russia assumed the role of protector of the ruling Qajar dynasty and as a

result secured the obedient servility of weak and degenerate Iranian monarchs.

The Treaty of Turkomanchai triumphantly closed one chapter of Russian expansion, but it did not exhaust it. The second chapter began with the occupation of the island of Ashur-Ada in the Bay of Astarabad in 1837. It was characterized by a gradual movement on the part of Russia to dominate Central Asia, and it was executed partly at the expense of Iran. In 1869 a Russian military expedition occupied Krasnovodsk on the eastern shore of the Caspian. The city was nominally under Iranian suzerainty, but protests from Teheran were of no avail. In 1873 another Russian expedition conquered the